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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8992
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 5952
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 3818
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 2330
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 7024
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 0989
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4396
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 0619
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INFO RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 6760

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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, DBENZE AND
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KMDR PREL KPAO OPRC SY

SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Syria/Sudan, Lebanon, Iraq,
Palestinian Territories, (5/15)

¶1. Summary: Syrian papers reported the visit to Damascus by Assamani Al-Waseela Assamani, Sudanese State Minister for Foreign Affairs, who conferred with Minister Walid al-Mouallem. Talks dealt with bilateral relations and means of boosting them in all fields. During the meeting, the Sudanese Minister briefed Minister Mouallem on the latest developments in Darfur issue following the signing of a peace agreement.

Papers also reported that Dr. Muhsen Bilal, Minister of Information, met with Bassam Qintar, brother of the Arab captive Samir Qintar, reiterating Syria's support of national resistance, recognized and approved by the international legitimacy. The Minister expressed Syria's pride in hero Qintar's steadfastness who still resists the Israeli occupation from his prison. He expressed hope that Qintar will be released soon to live freely with his family. Bassam Qintar said that "the steadfast Lebanese resistance has achieved a historical victory and forced an Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon which has been done with Syria's big support."

End of summary.

¶2. Selected Headlines:

"Extensive Lebanese denunciation of honoring John Bolton, US Ambassador to the UN. Former Lebanese Premier Huss: Free advocation for US American policy. American Intellectual Chumski: Lebanese national resistance is a model for Peoples of the region" (Government-owned Tishreen, 5/15)

"Abdullah Al-Ahmar, Assistant Secretary General of Al-Ba'th Party, and Foreign Minister Walid Mouallem review bilateral relations and developments in Darfur with Sudanese Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Assamani Al-Waseela Assamani" (Government-owned Tishreen, 5/15)

"Minister of Information Bilal receives Bassam Qintar, brother of Samir Qintar, Lebanese prisoner in Israeli jail: Syria supports the course of national Resistance" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 5/15)

"Palestinian Prime Minister Hanieh: We will not surrender to the Quartet and will not offer political concessions. Six Palestinians martyred in the West Bank. Hundreds of Palestinian houses demolished in Jerusalem" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 5/15)

"A new Israeli racial law to partition Palestinian families of 1948. Six Palestinians killed, five injured by Israeli attacks on Qabatiya and Jenin" (Government-owned Tishreen, 5/15)

"Iraqi designate Prime Minister al-Maliki may announce the formation of the government without Ministries of Interior and Defense. Four Americans and two British soldiers killed in Baghdad and Basra" (Government-owned Tishreen, 5/15)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"Crisis-Stricken Ones: Failure at Home and Disappointment Abroad"

Elias Murad, Chief Editor of government-owned Al-Ba'th, wrote (5/15): "No single day goes by or an occasion passes, even a local visit, without us hearing voices and abuses against Syria by some Lebanese individuals who have made it their job to harm Syria and Lebanon despite all the assertions that Syria no longer interferes in Lebanese domestic affairs.

"Some crisis-stricken people do not hesitate to implicate Syria in every little problem. Their insolence was such that they claimed that the recent demonstration in Beirut, which raised social demands, was a result of Syrian incitement....

fraternal Lebanese people other than incitement against their Arab brothers, particularly Syria. Through this they seek to cover their failure and absorb the anger of the public by blaming the failures on a foreign party or local ghosts. They went far in their accusations when they found that Syria was not willing to respond to them or to engage in media exchanges and dialogues with them, because they placed themselves outside the logic of dialogue in the first place. They used their authority and its tools, as much as they could, to create a tense atmosphere between Lebanon and Syria through abuses on one hand and conspiracies and incitement against Syria and its leadership on the other.

"Those people deluded themselves into thinking that Syria was weak or unable to resist the pressure. But they were disappointed when Syria surprised them with its ability, with the unity of its people behind the leadership of President Asad, and with its response. They sought help from foreigners and joined the game. They spread out in the world, from Washington to Paris, and some of them sought help from Israel, hoping it would save them from the crisis and the hole they tried to push Lebanon into...."

"Insulting the Cedar Trophy"

Ali Qasim, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, commented (5/15): "The 14 March forces in Lebanon have reportedly awarded John Bolton, US Representative to the United Nations, the Lebanese Cedar Trophy....

"Bolton is one of the most extremist symbols of the American right and the strongest supporter of Israel....

"This step shows the real motives of the 14 March forces. Their representatives, on their way back from New York, should visit comatose Sharon to award him a similar trophy as a medal for his massacres in Sabra and Shatila...."

"The US Council"

Ahmad Dawwa, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, commented (5/15): "The draft resolution that Britain, France, and the United States submitted to the Security Council on Syria and Lebanon shows, on one of its faces, the effort to divert the Council from its basic mission of maintaining world peace and security, preventing the eruption of conflicts and wars, and addressing other issues explained in the UN Charter.

"The other face of the draft is its blatant infringement of the UN Charter, which rejects, under any pretext, meddling in the internal affairs of countries for purposes that do not serve the Security Council's basic missions.

"The proposed draft resolution sets a serious precedent in the work of the international organization. Its adoption would strengthen, in an unprecedented way, the conviction that the Security Council has turned into a tool in the hands of the forces that proposed the draft to serve their own objectives and interests in the region and the world, contrary to the Council's mission. It would also pave the way for similar future resolutions that would torpedo security and stability and place the Council in confrontation with the free nations that refuse to give in to despotism and hegemony, which now characterize the policies of some big powers, primarily the United States.

"And the infiltration of the policy of discrimination and double-standards into the resolution adoption mechanism would torpedo the coexistence among nations, create a state of hostility that is already threatening world peace and security, and undermine the bases on which the Security Council and the United Nations were built. This tendency to destabilize international cooperation is no longer an ulterior US objective; it is a basic and declared element in the US foreign policy, meant to serve the "constructive instability" theory...."

"Withdrawal Is still not Scheduled"

Maha Sultan, a commentator in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (5/15): "President Bush's growing predicament in Iraq drove him to seek the advice and help of former secretaries of state and defense for the second time in four months.... But Bush still refuses to set a date for the withdrawal of the American troops from Iraq.... This shows stubbornness and insistence on disregarding the mistake of his Iraq policies....

"But he will find himself, along with the officials of his administration, forced to count more dead American bodies before the mid-term elections. If the number is big, as the scene in the Iraqi field indicates, the consequences for him and for his Republican Party will be disastrous...."

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